

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

## PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Busy Bees Playgroup, Hillsborough,  
County Down

Voluntary Playgroup, DE Ref No 4AB-0508

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in November 2022



Providing Inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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## Follow-up to the inspection of Busy Bees Playgroup, Hillsborough, BT26 6DX (4AB-0508)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Busy Bees Playgroup in April 2019<sup>1</sup>, which concluded that the pre-school needed to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- develop and implement effective behaviour management strategies;
- improve the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children in all areas of the pre-school curriculum, in particular the children's personal, social and emotional and language development;
- improve the quality of provision and outcomes for those children identified as having additional needs;
- improve the quality of staff interactions with the children;
- develop a robust process of self-evaluation and action planning leading to improvement; and
- ensure the designated person on the management committee has received the relevant training.

The pre-school's action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI. The pre-school's development plan was also adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out a monitoring visit in November 2021 and a follow-up inspection in November 2022.

In the interval since the inspection, the pre-school has received external support from the Early Years Organisation (EYO) through a 12-week intensive support programme which concluded in December 2020 and ongoing support from January 2021, which included a substantial number of on-site and virtual visits, and bespoke workshops.

During this period, other actions or changes which affect the work of the pre-school include:

- the appointment of a new leadership team in August 2021 and a new assistant in September 2022;
- changes to roles and responsibilities within the management committee;
- the appointment of a new Early Years Specialist (EYS) from the EYO;

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<sup>1</sup> [Pre-School Inspection - Busy Bees Playgroup, Hillsborough, County Down 4AB-0508 \(etini.gov.uk\)](https://www.etini.gov.uk/pre-school-inspection-busy-bees-playgroup-hillsborough-county-down-4ab-0508)

- the extension of the pre-school day from two and a half hours to three hours and twenty minutes;
- structural changes to extend the size of one of the playrooms; and
- the completion of relevant safeguarding training for the designated person on the management committee.

As a consequence of the external support and the key changes and actions taken within the pre-school, there have been significant improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings below.

## Key findings

### **The outcomes for learners have improved and are now very good.**

Almost all of the children settle quickly to play and have a very good understanding of the rules and routines in the playgroup. The children show kindness and empathy towards each other. They share resources, wait their turn, and help each other when getting dressed for outdoor play. Most of the children are developing well their independence and take personal responsibility for their learning environment, by tidying away toys and resources when they have finished playing with them. The behaviour of the children is very good and they manage all transitions very well. Most of the children listen very well during story time and engage confidently with adults and each other. A majority of children are very interested in mark-making and use creatively a wide range of writing tools, both indoors and outdoors, to express their ideas.

### **The quality of provision has improved and is now very good.**

The staff have made structural alterations to the accommodation and redesigned the layout of the two playrooms to create a bright, attractive, and well-organised learning environment, resourced with a good range of authentic and natural resources. The outdoor learning environment has been transformed through the creation of bespoke learning areas with resources that support all areas of the pre-school curriculum. These significant developments in the provision have impacted positively on the children's personal, social and emotional, language and physical development, and their curiosity and creativity. The quality of the staff interactions with the children is very good. They use a range of open-ended questions to develop the children's language and apply consistently a range of effective behaviour management strategies to support the very small number of children who find it difficult to sustain their play. There is a coherent approach to planning, observation and assessment across the two rooms and the staff are using effectively their observations and assessments of the children's learning to inform the short-term planning. The staff have identified appropriately potential opportunities to develop further the planning for outdoor play.

### **The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement have improved and are now very good.**

Determined and strategic leadership has transformed the provision within the playgroup and improved significantly the outcomes of the children. The rapid pace of change is attributed to: rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the work of the pre-school; well-targeted staff professional learning; the sharing of effective practice through regular meetings; and, a close partnership between the staff, EYS and management committee. The collegial team have identified and effected improvement beyond those areas identified in the original inspection. The staff have a clear vision and plan for the future development of the playgroup, which is underpinned by good quality action planning, and robust monitoring and evaluation processes to inform ongoing quality improvement.

## **Overall effectiveness**

Busy Bees Playgroup now demonstrates a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the children. The ETI will monitor how the playgroup sustains improvement.

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